

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) An intrinsically stable shirred tubular single-layer or multilayer food casing[[,]] ~~which essentially consists~~ consisting essentially of synthetic polymers and having ~~has~~, without a net or reinforcing packaging, sufficient intrinsic stability to ~~be able to~~ be processed on fully automatic stuffing machines.
2. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~it~~ said shirred food casing is compressed in a ratio of 100:1 or more[[,]] ~~preferably 120:1 to 500:1.~~
3. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein ~~it~~ said shirred food casing has a sigma-5 value (longitudinal/transverse, measured wet) of less than 20/20 N/mm<sup>2</sup>[[,]] ~~preferably a sigma- % value in the range from 2/2 to 10/10 N/mm<sup>2</sup>.~~
4. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 3~~, wherein, after shirring, it extends in the longitudinal direction by no more than 15 %[[,]] ~~preferably by no more than 10 %[[,]] particularly preferably by no more than 5 %[[,]]~~ when it is stored on a smooth planar support at room temperature and 60 % rh.
5. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 4~~, wherein ~~it~~ said shirred food casing bends under the effect of its own weight by no more than 20 %, ~~preferably by no more than 5 %[[,]]~~ based on the length

between two support points, at room temperature.

6. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein it said shirred food casing is single-layered.
7. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 6~~, wherein it said shirred food casing has a wall thickness of no more than 90  $\mu\text{m}$ [[,]] ~~particularly preferably from 15 to 30  $\mu\text{m}$ .~~
8. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 7~~, wherein it said shirred food casing contains soft synthetic polymers or polymer mixtures[[,]] ~~preferably aliphatic polyamides[[,]] or aliphatic copolyamides[[,]] or polyether block amides.~~
9. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 8~~, wherein it said shirred food casing is plasticized by at least one monomeric plasticizer[[,]] ~~preferably by dimethylsulfoxide[[,]] butane-1[[,]]3-diol[[,]] glycerol[[,]] water[[,]] ethylene glycol[[,]] propylene glycol[[,]] butylene glycol[[,]] diglyceride[[,]] diglycol ether[[,]] formamide[[,]] N-methylformamide[[,]] N[[,]]N-dimethylformamide[[,]] N[[,]]N-dimethylurea[[,]] N[[,]]N-dimethylacetamide[[,]] polyalkylene oxide[[,]] glycerol mono-[[,]] di- or triacetate[[,]] sorbitol[[,]] erythritol[[,]] mannitol[[,]] gluconic acid[[,]] galacturonic acid[[,]] glucaric acid[[,]] glucuronic acid[[,]] polyhydroxycarboxylic acids[[,]] glucose[[,]] fructose[[,]] sucrose[[,]] citric acid or a citric acid derivative[[,]] or any desired mixture thereof.~~
10. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 9~~, wherein it said shirred food casing has a nominal caliber of no more than 40 mm.

11. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 10~~, wherein the casing has a water vapor permeability of 5 to 1000 g/m<sup>2</sup> d[[,]] ~~preferably 20 to 400 g/m<sup>2</sup> d[[,]] particularly preferably 50 to 200 g/m<sup>2</sup> d[[,]]~~ determined as specified in DIN 53 122 at 23 °C.
12. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 11~~, wherein the casing is corona-treated on the outside.
13. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 12~~, wherein it said shirred food casing is closed at one end[[,]] ~~preferably by twisting[[,]] welding[[,]] gluing or by a metal or plastic clip.~~
14. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 13~~, wherein the casing is permeable to cold smoke, warm smoke, or hot smoke.
15. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claim[[s]] 1 ~~to 14~~, wherein it said shirred food casing achieves the required intrinsic stability by a temporary setting of the shirring geometry and the resultant breakdown in tension of the shirred pleats.
16. (Currently Amended) ~~The use of the~~ Method of making sausage encased in a shirred food casing as claimed in one or more of claim[[s]] 1 to 15 comprising filling said shirred food casing with sausage emulsion on a fully automatic stuffing apparatus[[,]] preferably on fully automatic sausage stuffing[[,]] portioning[[,]] clipping and twisting apparatuses.
17. (New) An encased sausage comprising a shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1.

18. (New) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein said shirred food casing extends in the longitudinal direction by no more than 10 % when stored on a smooth planar support at room temperature and 60 % rh after shirring.
19. (New) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein said shirred food casing bends under the effect of its own weight by no more than 5 %, based on the length between two support points, at room temperature.
20. (New) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein said shirred food casing comprises aliphatic polyamides, aliphatic copolyamides, polyether block amides or mixtures thereof.
21. (New) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein said shirred food casing comprises plasticizer selected from dimethylsulfoxide, butane-1,3-diol, glycerol, water, ethylene glycol, propylene glycol, butylene glycol, diglyceride, diglycol ether, formamide, N-methylformamide, N,N-dimethylformamide, N,N-dimethylurea, N,N-dimethylacetamide, polyalkylene oxide, glycerol mono-, di- or triacetate, sorbitol, erythritol, mannitol, gluconic acid, galacturonic acid, glucaric acid, glucuronic acid, polyhydroxycarboxylic acids, glucose, fructose, sucrose, citric acid, a citric acid derivative, or mixtures thereof.